

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application:

Listing of claims

1. (currently amended) An article transport, meterer and loader, comprising:
 - a plurality of parallel article lanes disposed in vertical relation above and in angular relation to a direction of orientation of a plurality of parallel conveyors, said plurality of parallel conveyors including:
 - a first article infeed conveyor operating at a first linear speed;
 - a second metering conveyor operating at a second linear speed having a plurality of transverse metering lugs disposed at article intervals;
 - and
 - a third grouping conveyor operating at a third linear speed having a plurality of transverse grouping lugs disposed at predetermined group intervals;
 - wherein said first linear speed is greater than said third linear speed, and said second linear speed is less than said first linear speed, and said second linear speed is selectively variable with respect to said third linear speed;
 - whereby articles are metered from said first article infeed conveyor by said second metering conveyor into an article arrays passing formed between respective adjacent said transverse grouping lugs and subsequently urged from said third grouping conveyor in said array.

2. (canceled)

3. (original) The invention of claim 1, wherein said second linear speed is less than said third linear speed.

4. (original) The invention of claim 1, wherein said second linear speed is substantially equal to said third linear speed.

5. (original) The invention of claim 1, wherein said plurality of parallel article lanes are selectively engageable.

6.-7. (canceled)